

# In support of Twining/Normandy, Mass+Main and a more diverse and livable Cambridge

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Sun 4/26/2015 3:11 PM

City Clerk Agenda

To: City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>;

Cc: Lopez, Donna <dlopez@cambridgema.gov>;

To the Honorable, the City Council,

I write in support of a diverse and livable Cambridge and, thus, in support of upzoning that will allow the construction of Mass+Main.

A diverse and livable Cambridge requires that Cambridge build housing that allows a diverse population live here. Mass+Main achieves that.

You will be receiving a number of emails saying that a diverse and livable Cambridge requires the rejection of Mass+Main. Understanding that position to be, on its face, untenable, these emails will purport to favor what's called an alternative proposal made by one of your members. The best one can say about this so-called alternative is that it's a fantasy, as its supporters neither control the land nor have the financial backing to make it real.

The Cambridge housing crisis is real. Cambridge's affordability crisis is real. It demands immediate, real solutions, not fantasies. Mass+Main is a real solution that will create more housing and more affordable housing.

Opposing Mass+Main is an implicit endorsement of a policy of gentrification and displacement. People who can afford the market rate housing in Mass+Main and want to live in Cambridge will find a way to live in Cambridge. Rather than living in Mass+Main, they will use their financial resources to outbid those with less money, driving them out of Cambridge.

After the Council acts positively on the zoning petition - and I'm confident you will - your work is not done. You must, as well:

- Respond to the housing crisis directly through increased density – taller buildings and increased floor area ratios – at major transportation hubs and along major corridors in order to allow the creation of 8,500 new housing units over the next 15 years.
- For the rest of Central Square, at a minimum pass the zoning recommendations offered by the Central Square Advisory Committee, recommendations the Council itself requested.
- Increase linkage fees and the inclusionary zoning of affordable housing, so that at least 20% of new units be affordable to low-, moderate-, and middle-income families.
- Reduce or eliminate parking minimums, at least around transit hubs.
- Use every means of influence the City has to increase the amount of housing universities build on their campuses in order to reduce the pressure on the Cambridge housing market.

To be clear, Mass+Main is not perfect. Because it is insufficiently dense and tall, it doesn't include enough housing. And because Cambridge automobile policies lag its own stated values, it continues to encourage the use of cars by providing too much parking. Unlike opponents of Mass+Main, I'm not going to reject it in favor of my own fantasy. In Twining/Normandy, we have a group prepared to bet money on the future of Cambridge. They deserve our support, our encouragement, and our constant vigilance to make sure that they live up to their part of this bargain.

- Saul Tannenbaum  
16 Cottage Street

cc: City Clerk Donna Lopez, for inclusion in the official Council record

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